THE LIVING VOICE OF GREEK AND LATIN LITERATURE

THE PRONUNCIATION AND READING OF CLASSICAL LATIN:

A Practical Guide

by

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DEMONSTRATION TEXTS AND PRACTICE EXERCISES

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TO

W. SIDNEY ALLEN

PREFACE

This booklet contains in printed form the Latin texts that are used in the recording for demonstration purposes, as well as the suggested practice exercises. One obvious advantage of a recording in language study is that the user can stop or repeat the recording at any time in order to verify or to reinforce his or her aural impressions. It is my hope that students using this recording will make full use of the possibilities of stopping or replaying so that each student can advance at his or her own individual pace.

Having the texts and the exercises before the eyes will provide visual reinforcement to the process of aural sensitization and comprehension. After all, most of us have been conditioned to absorb literature through the eyes rather than through the ears. To savor the full beauty of Latin literature, however, some form of reconditioning is necessary so that our ears can become active participants in the literary process. The principal aim of this recording is to encourage and to facilitate this reconditioning.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of my colleagues Professors Heller, Moreland, and Sonkowsky, each of whom offered some excellent suggestions towards the improvement of this recording. The recording is gratefully dedicated to W. Sidney Allen whose fundamental works on the pronunciation of classical Latin have provided a solid linguistic basis for the present endeavor.

New York, April 1984 S.G.D.

Text of Vergil, AENEID, Book I, lines 1-7

ARMA virumque canō, Trōiae quī prīmus ab ōrīs
Ītaliam, fātō profugus, Lāvīniaque vēnit
lītora, multum ille et terrīs iactātus et altō
vī superum saevae memorem Iūnōnis ob īram;
multa quoque et bellō passus, dum conderet urbem,
īnferretque deōs Latiō, genus unde Latīnum,
Albānīque patrēs, atque altae moenia Rōmae.

Features of traditional pronunciation

1. Letter r not trilled.
2. Final m nasalized with lips together.
3. Double consonants pronounced as if single.
4. Automatic and unnatural accentuation of first long syllable of each measure.

Features of restored pronunciation

1. Letter r trilled
2. Final m nasalized with lips apart.
3. Double consonants lengthened.
4. Natural word accents given.

The Latin Alphabet and its Pronunciation

(Only the small, non-capital forms of the letters are given.)

Latin Letter*	International Phonetic Symbol
Short a (ă)	/a/
Long a (ā)	/a:/
The diphthong ae	/aI/
The diphthong au	/aU/
b	/b/
b before t or s	/p/
c	/k/
The combination ch	/k'/
d	/d/
Short e (ĕ)	/ɛ/
Long e (ē)	/e:/
The diphthong ei	/eI/
The diphthong eu	/ɛU/
f	/f/
g	/g/
The combination gn	/ŋn/

*In the following list, the symbol ˘ over a vowel indicates a vowel of short quantity, the symbol ¯ indicates a vowel of long quantity. These symbols are also traditionally used to indicate respectively short and long syllables. (See below, Rules of Syllabic Quantity and Scansion.) Long e and long o are pronounced relatively closed , i.e. with the lips relatively together. Short e and short o are pronounced relatively open, i.e. with the lips relatively apart.

h	/h/
Short i (ĭ)	/I/
Long i (ī)	/i:/
Consonantal i	/j/
k	/k/
l	/l/
m	/m/
Final m (see p. 10)	/~/ (nasalization)
n	/n/
n before c, g, x, qu	/ŋ/
Short o (ŏ)	/ɔ/
Long o (ō)	/o:/
The diphthong oe	/ɔI/
p	/p/
The combination ph	/p'/
r	/r/ (trilled)
s	/s/
t	/t/
The combination th	/t'/
Short u (ŭ)	/U/
Long u (ū)	/u:/
Consonantal u	/w/
The diphthong ui	/UI/
x	/ks/
y	/y/
z	/z/

Pronunciation Practice of Selected Vowels/Consonants

c: că cā cĕ cē cĭ cī cŏ cō cŭ cū

g: gă gā gĕ gē gĭ gī gŏ gō gŭ gū

r: ră rā rĕ rē rĭ rī rŏ rō rŭ rū

(This exercise should be practiced both horizonally and vertically.)

Final m: am em im um = ã ẽ ĩ ũ

(The combination om has been omitted since final om does not exist in classical Latin. It is important to remember that the vowel immediately preceding the final m is itself nasalized and becomes a long vowel.)

Classical Latin Accentuation

1. Terminology

In a word of three or more syllables, the last syllable is generally referred to as the ultima, the next to the last as the penult, and the syllable immediately preceding the penult as the antepenult. Thus in the word cogito, the syllable -to is the ultima, the syllable -gi- is the penult, the syllable co- the antepenult.

2. If a Latin word has only two syllables, the accent is always on the penult.

3. In a Latin word of three or more syllables, if the penult is a long syllable, it receives the accent.

4. If the penult is a short syllable, it is the antepenult which receives the accent.

Examples of long penult (accent on penult):

fortū́na, antī́quus, cōnsḗrvō, puélla

Examples of short penult (accent on antepenult):

cṓgĭtō, vídĕō, pátrĭa, ígĭtur*

Rules to determine syllabic quantity

1. A syllable may be classified long either by nature or by position.

2. A syllable is classified long by nature if it contains any one of the long vowels or any diphthong. This syllable is said to be long by the nature of its vowel or diphthong.

*The symbols ¯ and ˘ , which were previously used to designate vowel length, are here used to designate syllabic quantity, i.e. to indicate whether a syllable is long or short. As we shall see from the rules of syllabic quantity, a short vowel does not necessarily mean a short syllable. Some scholars prefer the designation "heavy" and "light" to that of "long" and "short" syllables. Although the use of the terms "heavy" and "light" does avoid ambiguity by distinguishing between vowel length and syllabic quantity, the words "heavy" and "light" nevertheless have for users of American English connotations of stress and lack of stress that could cause confusion in the oral rendition of Latin poetry. And so with considerable regret, the traditional terms of "long" and "short" syllables have been retained for reasons of greater effectiveness in teaching the reading of Latin poetry aloud.

3. A syllable is classified long by position if it contains any one of the short vowels that is then followed by at least two successive consonants. This syllable is said to be long by the position of its vowel in front of two or more consonants.

N.B. The letters x and z count as double consonants, qu as a single consonant, while h is not here regarded as a consonant.

4. If a syllable does not qualify as long either by nature or position, it is classified short.

Exceptions to the general rules of syllabic quantity

A combination of plosive consonant (p,b,c,g,t,d) plus a liquid consonant (l,r) may or may not "make position," i.e. the syllable preceding such a combination may be theoretically classified either as long or short. (Such a syllable is indicated by the symbol ⏓.) Thus we may read the word patris either as pāt-ris (long penult) or as pă-tris (short penult). Note that in pāt-ris the penult is a closed syllable (closed by the t), in pă-tris the penult is an open syllable with the t initiating the following syllable.* Latin poetry has examples of the same syllable classified both long and short in the very same verse: Vergil, Aen.II.663 pă-tris, pāt-rem; Ovid, Met.XIII.617 volŭ-cri, volūc-ris.

*A closed syllable ends with a consonant, an open syllable ends with a vowel.

Pronunciation Practice of twenty-four words

Particular attention should be paid to the pronunciation of all underlined letters in the following exercise.

1. anchor — áncora
2. I sing — cánō
3. alas — heu
4. faith — fídēs
5. gift — dónum
6. conserve — cōnsérvō
7. I see — vídeō
8. great — mágnus
9. girl — puélla
10. people — pópulus
11. Roman — Rōmā́nus
12. to whom — cui
13. who — quī
14. immediately — státim
15. to bear — férre
16. never — númquam
17. obtain — obtíneō
18. repeatedly — idéntidem
19. tyrant — tyránnus
20. fortune — fortū́na
21. son — fī́lius
22. battle — proélium
23. to hear — audī́re
24. then — deínde

Text of Cicero, In Catilinam I.1

Quō usque tandem abūtēre, Catilīna, patientiā nostrā? Quam diū etiam furor iste tuus nōs ēlūdet? Quem ad fīnem sēsē effrēnāta iactābit audācia? Nihilne tē nocturnum praesidium Palātī, nihil urbis vigiliae, nihil timor populī, nihil concursus bonōrum omnium, nihil hic mūnītissimus habendī senātūs locus, nihil hōrum ōra vultūsque mōvērunt? Patēre tua cōnsilia nōn sentīs, cōnstrictam iam hōrum omnium scientiā tenērī coniūrātiōnem tuam nōn vidēs? Quid proximā, quid superiōre nocte ēgerīs, ubi fuerīs, quōs convocāverīs, quid cōnsilī cēperīs, quem nostrum ignōrāre arbitrāris?

Scansion and reading of the dactylic hexameter

1. A dactyl = one long syllable + two short syllables = — ∪ ∪
2. A spondee = two long syllables = — —
3. A trochee = one long syllable + one short syllable = — ∪
4. A dactylic hexameter with the maximum number of dactyls = 5 dactyls + 1 spondee or 1 trochee =

(Measures) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

— ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ⏓

5. The full metrical scheme of the dactylic hexameter, including spondee substitution for dactyls, is

(Measures) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

— ⏕ | — ⏕ | — ⏕ | — ⏕ | — ⏕ | — ⏓

Examples of elision of long vowels and final m

prōmīsī ultōrem > prōmīsjultōrem; Jūnō aeternum > Jūnwaeternum; multum ille > multwille

Reading Vergil, AENEID I.1-7 (dactylic hexameter)

Stage 1. Rhythm without words (chanted on la la...)

Stage 2. Rhythm with words (chanted)

Arma virumque cano Troiae qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
litora multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram
multa quoque et bello passus dum conderet urbem
inferretque deos Latio genus unde Latinum
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.

Stage 3. Rhythm + words + accents (chanted)

Arma virumque cano Troiae qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
litora multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram
multa quoque et bello passus dum conderet urbem
inferretque deos Latio genus unde Latinum
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.

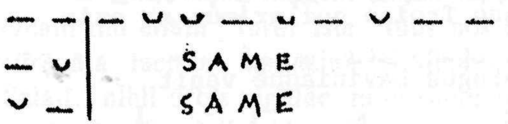
Stage 4. Rhythm + words + accents (spoken tones)

Stage 5. = Stage 4 + phrasing and interpretation

N.B. In the recording, for the sake of simplicity, all elided syllables are omitted at stages 2, 3, and 4.

Reading Catullus 1 (hendecasyllabic meter)

Hendecasyllabic metrical scheme:



Stage 1. Rhythm without words (chanted on la la...)

Stage 2. Rhythm with words (chanted)

Stage 3. Rhythm + words + accents (chanted)

Cui dono lepidum nouum libellum
arida modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli, tibi; namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum
omne aeuum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Iuppiter et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli
qualecumque; quod, o patrona virgo,
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.

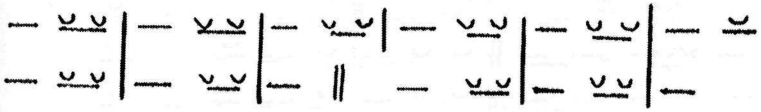
Stage 4. Rhythm + words + accents (spoken tones)

Stage 5. = Stage 4 + phrasing and interpretation

N.B. In the recording, for the sake of simplicity, all elided syllables are omitted at stages 2, 3, and 4.

Catullus 101 (elegiac couplet), read at stage 5

Metrical scheme of the elegiac couplet:



N.B. Symbol ‖ = word end

The elegiac couplet may be described as a dactylic hexameter followed by a dactylic pentameter.

MVLTAS per gentes et multa per aequora uectus
aduenio has miseras,‖frater, ad inferias,
ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem.
quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum,
heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi,
nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,
atque in perpetuum, frater, aue atque uale.

Horace, ODES Bk.II, no.10 (sapphic strophe), stage 5

Metrical scheme of sapphic strophe:

— ∪ — — — || ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ⏓
— ∪ — — — || ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ⏓
— ∪ — — — || ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ⏓
— ∪ ∪ — ⏓

Rectius vives, | Licini, neque altum
semper urgendo | neque, dum procellas
cautus horrescis, | nimium premendo
litus iniquum.

auream quisquis mediocritatem
diligit, tutus caret obsoleti
sordibus tecti, caret invidenda
sobrius aula.
saepius ventis agitatur ingens
pinus et celsae graviore casu
decidunt turres feriuntque summos
fulgura montis.
sperat infestis, metuit secundis
alteram sortem bene praeparatum
pectus. informis hiemes reducit
Iuppiter, idem
summovet. non, si male nunc, et olim
sic erit: quondam cithara tacentem
suscitat Musam neque semper arcum
tendit Apollo.
rebus angustis animosus atque
fortis appare; sapienter idem
contrahes vento nimium secundo
turgida vela.

Horace, ODES, Bk.II, no.14 (alkaic strophe), stage 5

Metrical scheme of alkaic strophe:

⏓ — ∪ — — || — ∪ ∪ — ∪ ⏓
⏓ — ∪ — — || — ∪ ∪ — ∪ ⏓
⏓ — ∪ — — — ∪ — ⏓
— ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ⏓

Eheu fugaces, | Postume, Postume,
labuntur anni | nec pietas moram
rugis et instanti senectae
adferet indomitaeque morti:

non si trecenis quotquot eunt dies,
amice, places illacrimabilem
Plutona tauris, qui ter amplum
Geryonen Tityonque tristi
compescit unda, scilicet omnibus,
quicumque terrae munere vescimur,
enaviganda, sive reges
sive inopes erimus coloni.
frustra cruento Marte carebimus
fractisque rauci fluctibus Hadriae,
frustra per autumnos nocentem
corporibus metuemus Austrum:
visendus ater flumine languido
Cocytos errans et Danai genus
infame damnatusque longi
Sisyphus Aeolides laboris:
linquenda tellus et domus et placens
uxor, neque harum quas colis arborum
te praeter invisas cupressos
ulla brevem dominum sequetur:
absumet heres Caecuba dignior
servata centum clavibus et mero
tinget pavimentum superbo,
pontificum potiore cenis.

Two hints in reading aloud

1. Try to avoid lengthening a short accented syllable. For example, in the words cắnō and pắtrēs, keep the accented syllables short.

2. Try to avoid shortening a long unaccented syllable. For example, in the words mūnītíssimus and Īnfērrétque, keep the first two syllables of each word long. Likewise, in the words ŏ́rīs and ắltō, keep the last syllable long.

* * * * *

For those who wish to explore further the linguistic and the metrical aspects of classical Latin, the following works will be of interest:

W.S. Allen, Vox Latina: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Latin, 2 ed., Cambridge Univ. Press

W.S. Allen, Accent and Rhythm, Cambridge Univ. Press

E.H. Sturtevant, The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin, 2 ed., reprinted by Ares Publishers

Rosenmeyer, Ostwald, Halporn, The Meters of Greek and Latin Poetry, Bobbs Merrill